

REMARKS

This response is intended as a full and complete response to the final Office Action mailed January 24, 2006. In the Office Action, the Examiner notes that claims 1-30 are pending; claims 1-25, 29 and 30 are rejected; and claims 26-28 are allowed. By this response, the Applicants have cancelled claims 1-2, 4-25 and 29-30; amended claim 3; and submitted formal versions of all of the drawings.

In view of both the above amendments and the following discussion, Applicants submit that the claims pending in the application are not anticipated and are non-obvious under the respective provisions of 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103. Thus, Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance.

It is to be understood that Applicants, by amending the claims, do not acquiesce to the Examiner's characterizations of the art of record or to Applicants' subject matter recited in the pending claims. Further, Applicants are not acquiescing to the Examiner's statements as to the applicability of the art of record to the pending claims by filing the instant responsive amendments.

Amendments to the Claims

By this response, the Applicants have amended claim 3. The amendments to claim 3 are fully supported by the Application as originally filed. Furthermore, the amendments to claim 3 merely change this claim from being dependent upon claim 1 to being dependent upon claim 26. The Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of claim 3 is such that it has likely already been considered in the context of independent claim 26, and thus should be entered in response to the Final Office Action because it will not require further consideration.

Submission of Formal Drawings

By this response, the Applicants have submitted formal versions of all 3 sheets of drawings, including Figures 1, 2a and 2b. No amendments have been made to the drawings beyond any amendments that have already been submitted in previous responses.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 26-28. The Applicants further respectfully submit that claims 26-28 contain precise language and are allowable because of the presence of this precise language, and not necessarily because of any paraphrasing of this language that may be included in the Examiner's "Allowable Subject Matter" section on pages 11-12 of the 1/24/2006 Office Action.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection of Claims 1-4, 6, 14-19 and 25

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 6, 14-19 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Maillard et al. (EP 963 119 A1, hereinafter "Maillard").

For unrelated reasons, the Applicants have cancelled claims 1-2, 4, 6, 14-19 and 25, and thus the rejection against these claims is moot. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-2, 4, 6, 14-19 and 25 be withdrawn.

Furthermore, claim 3 has been amended to be dependent upon allowed claim 26, and for this reason claim 3 is patentable. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of claims 3 also be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 1, 14, 29 and 30

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 14, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sitnik (U.S. Patent No. 6,160,570, hereinafter "Sitnik") in view of Mao et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,886,178, hereinafter "Mao").

For unrelated reasons, the Applicants have cancelled claims 1, 14, 29 and 30, and thus the rejection against these claims is moot. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 14, 29 and 30 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claim 5

The Examiner has rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maillard in view of Dureau (U.S. Patent No. 6,345,389 B1, hereinafter "Dureau").

For unrelated reasons, the Applicants have cancelled claim 5, and thus the rejection against this claim is moot. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of claim 5 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 7-12 and 20-23

The Examiner has rejected claims 7-12 and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maillard in view of Wachob (U.S. Patent No. 5,155,591, hereinafter "Wachob").

For unrelated reasons, the Applicants have cancelled claims 7-12 and 20-23, and thus the rejection against these claims is moot. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of claims 7-12 and 20-23 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 13 and 24

The Examiner has rejected claims 13 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maillard in view of Wachob in further view of Bryant et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,652,615, hereinafter "Bryant").

For unrelated reasons, the Applicants have cancelled claims 13 and 24, and thus the rejection against these claims is moot. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of claims 13 and 24 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Thus, Applicants submit that all the claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues in any of the claims now pending in the application, it is requested that the Examiner telephone Stephen Guzzi, at (732) 383-1405, or Eamon J. Wall, Esq., at (732) 530-9404, so appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

3/23/06

E J Wall

Eamon J. Wall, Attorney
Reg. No. 39,414
(732) 530-9404

Patterson & Sheridan, LLP
Attorneys at Law
595 Shrewsbury Avenue, Suite 100
Shrewsbury, New Jersey 07702